

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Annual Filing )  
Requirements for 2015 Pertaining to the ) Case No. 15-1115-TP-COI  
Provisioning of High-Cost Universal )  
Service. )

FINDING AND ORDER

The Commission finds:

- (1) On May 7, 1997, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Report and Order in CC Docket 96-45 (96-45) (*In the Matter of Federal-State Board on Universal Service*) adopting rules to promote universal service consistent with the requirements of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In its 96-45 decision, the FCC, among other things, set forth parameters for the states to determine those carriers eligible to receive federal universal service support. Furthermore, the states were to determine those carriers that should be classified as rural carriers or non-rural carriers for the purpose of federal universal service support consistent with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.
- (2) On May 23, 2001, the FCC released its Fourteenth Report and Order and Twenty-Second Order on Reconsideration in CC Docket No. 96-45, and determined that states should be responsible for deciding whether rural carriers are using their universal service high-cost support, consistent with 47 U.S.C. 254(e). Under 47 U.S.C. 254(e), carriers must use universal service support "only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended." Accordingly, the FCC stated that it would require the states that wish to receive federal universal service high-cost funding support for rural carriers within their boundaries to file a certification with the FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) stating that all federal high-cost funds flowing to those carriers in that state will be used in a manner consistent with 47 U.S.C. 254(e). Absent such certification, carriers will not receive support. Moreover, in the event that a state determines that a carrier has not complied with 47 U.S.C. 254(e), the state shall have the authority to revoke a carrier's certification.

- (3) On November 18, 2011, the FCC released a Report and Order in WC Docket No. 10-90, et al., which among other things comprehensively reformed the federal universal service support program. In its Report and Order, the FCC required states to certify that all federal high-cost and Connect America Fund support was used in the preceding year and will be used in the coming calendar year for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and service for which the support is intended, regardless of the rule under which that support is provided. The certification required by 47 C.F.R. 54.314 is due by October 1 of each year for carriers to be eligible to receive support in each quarter of the succeeding year.
- (4) In order to comply with the FCC's certification requirements and consistent with Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-09(C), on July 29, 2015, the Commission released an Entry in the instant docket calling for notarized affidavits from those carriers presently receiving federal universal service high-cost funding in Ohio, attesting that they will utilize such support consistent with 47 U.S.C. 254(e). Each Ohio high-cost eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) that anticipates funding for calendar year 2016 from any high-cost support mechanism was directed to complete and file with the Commission in this proceeding a notarized copy of the affidavit form (Attachment A of the July 29, 2015, Entry) on or before September 1, 2015. Without such certification, the FCC will not permit carriers to continue to receive federal universal service support. Properly filed affidavits were received from 42 carriers for the study area codes set forth in Attachment A.
- (5) Staff has reviewed the affidavits submitted by the carriers and has concluded that the affidavits satisfy the FCC's requirements for certification to receive high-cost funding consistent with 47 U.S.C. 254(e).
- (6) The Commission finds that certification should be granted for the carriers set forth in Attachment A to receive federal high-cost support, high-cost loop support (47 C.F.R., Part 36), local switching support (47 C.F.R. 54.301), and any high-cost support received as a result of a purchase of exchanges (47 C.F.R. 54.305) for rural carriers.

It is, therefore,

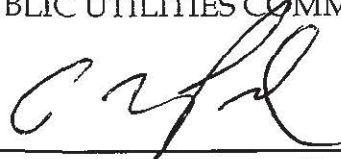
ORDERED, That all carriers identified in Attachment A are hereby certified to the FCC and the USAC as being eligible to receive federal high-cost support, high-cost loop support (47 C.F.R., Part 36), local switching support (47 C.F.R. 54.301), and any high-cost support received as a result of a purchase of exchanges (47 C.F.R. 54.305) for rural carriers, as such carriers have demonstrated their intent to utilize such funding in a manner consistent with 47 U.S.C. 254(e). It is, further,

ORDERED, That the Commission will send a letter to the USAC and the FCC by October 1, 2015, certifying the carriers as being eligible to receive federal high-cost support for 2016. It is, further,

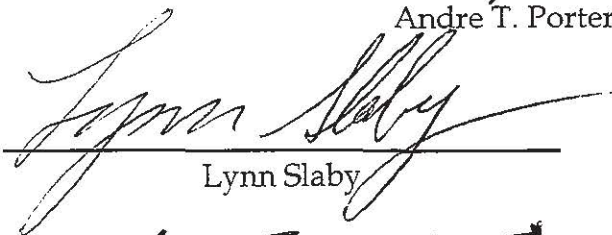
ORDERED, That nothing contained in this Finding and Order shall be deemed binding upon this Commission in any subsequent investigation or proceeding involving the justness or reasonableness of any rate, charge, rule, or regulation. It is, further,

ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon all parties of record.

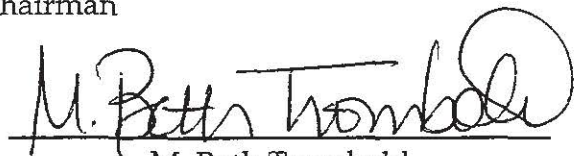
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO



Andre T. Porter, Chairman



Lynn Slaby



M. Beth Trombold



Asim Z. Haque



Thomas W. Johnson

JSA/dah

Entered in the Journal

**SEP 23 2015**



Barcy F. McNeal

Secretary

Company Name	Study Area Code
Arcadia Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom	300585
Arthur Mutual Telephone Company	300586
AT&T Ohio	305150
Ayersville Telephone Company	300588
Bascom Mutual Telephone Company	300589
Benton Ridge Telephone Company	300590
Buckland Telephone Company	300591
CenturyTel of Ohio dba CenturyLink	300630
Champaign Telephone Company	300594
Chillicothe Telephone Company	300597
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company LLC	305062
Columbus Grove Telephone Company d/b/a Fairpoint Communications	300604
Conneaut Telephone Company	300606
Continental Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom	300607
Doylestown Telephone Company	300609
Farmers Mutual Telephone Company	300612
Fort Jennings Telephone Company	300614
Frontier Communications of Michigan, Inc.	300682
Frontier North, Inc.	300615
Germantown Independent Telephone Company d/b/a Fairpoint Communications	300618
Glandorf Telephone Company, Inc.	300619
Kalida Telephone Company, Inc.	300625
Little Miami Communication Corporation d/b/a TDS Telecom	300613
McClure Telephone	300598
Middle Point Home Telephone Company	300633
Minford Telephone Company	300634
New Knoxville Telephone Company	300639
Nova Telephone Company	300644
Oakwood Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom	300645
Orwell Telephone Company d/b/a Fairpoint Communications	300649
Pattersonville Telephone Company	300651
Ridgeville Telephone Company	300654
Sherwood Mutual Telephone Association, Inc.	300656
Sycamore Telephone Company	300658
Telephone Service Company	300659
The Ottoville Mutual Telephone Company	300650
United Telephone Company dba CenturyLink	300661
Vanlue Telephone Company d/b/a TDS Telecom	300662
Vaughnsville Telephone Company	300663
Wabash Telephone Company	300664
Windstream Ohio Inc.	300665
Windstream Western Reserve, Inc.	300666